Maryland Police Accept County Curb On Release of Information to Press

Maryland State Police agreed yesterday to follow limitations drawn up by Prince George's State's Attorney Arthur A. Marshall Jr. on what information can be released to newspapers.

In a two-hour meeting at Baltimore, State and County officials resolved a dispute that came to a head following the slaying in September of four children of Charlene Hargis in Laurel. Mrs. Hargis is awaiting trial on murder charges.

Marshall accused the State Police, who investigated the case, of disclosing too much information to the newspapers and directed that they no longer investigate homicides in the County.

Col. Carey Jarman, superintendent of the State Police, said the disclosures violated earlier directives given by Marshall and said the orders would be followed in the future.

John Sass, an assistant attorney general, said his office considered the unauthorized release of information "a very serious violation" and he told Jarman "it should be dealt with seriously if it happens again."

Marshall said his primary objections were to accounts attributed to police of statements made by Mrs. Hargis to her husband and others, accounts of her alleged attempts to commit suicide after the shootings, and speculative discussion of the evidence. Marshall has forbidden police to release information about statements of accused persons or about their past records or to make speculative statements.

Sass told Marshall that the State Police could not be ordered to remain out of investigations. Marshall said the Prince George's delegation to the General Assmebly is reviewing the case and may seek legislation clarifying the overlapping roles of County and State police.

All at the meeting agreed, Marshall said, that "in the future the County police will handle more of the investigative work."